



REPLACEMENT PARAGRAPH AND CLAIMS

In the Claims

Please delete claims 13, 20, 24, 25, 29, 30, 35, 36, 40, 43, 46 and replace the following with identically numbered and amended claims:

a1 (Amended) 51. The method for implementing a coinless gaming environment as recited in claim 49, wherein said reading of said unique identifier includes scanning said bar code.

a7 (Amended) 78. The change machine as recited in claim 71 wherein said input is a combined bar code reader and currency reader.

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REMARKS

In response to Office action of February 12, 2001, Applicants respectfully request replacement of claims 51 and 78, in accordance with the instructions attached hereto. Applicants also request consideration of the following remarks.

The present invention as recited in claims 1-78 relates to a method and device for use in a coinless gaming environment having a central processing system interconnected to a plurality of gaming machines and a plurality of change machines.

None of the references of record when considered singly or in combination with one another, describe the use of only a unique address encoded on a gaming coupon or gaming slip. The Examiner relied upon Burns et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,048,269 in rejecting claims 1-7,

9-12, 14-19, 21-23, 26-28, 31-34, 39,41, 42, 45, 56-60, 62-67, 69-75, 77, and 78. However, it is submitted that the claims are patentably distinguishable over the Burns et al patent for a number of reasons.

The Burns et al patent relates to a coinless slot machine system and method that generates and reads a permanent storage record which includes a bar code that is representative of a currency value and a random number.

Nothing in Burns shows or suggests the use of a unique memory address as the encoded bar code. The bar code of the current invention does not include a monetary value of the slip or coupon. In fact, the current invention overcomes several disadvantages of the Burns et al system by utilizing only a unique memory address in the bar code. For instance, it is generally easier for an unauthorized person or system to decipher a code if some of the information contained within the code is known. As such, the Burns system code which includes and displays the value of the gaming slip, presents a major security risk since part of the code is publicized.

Another disadvantage of the Burns system is the fact that a monetary value and a unique number are utilized in the bar code thereby resulting in the need for a larger area to accommodate the numbers and code. As such, in order to make the bar code and numbers fit onto a reasonably sized gaming coupon, one is forced to reduce the number of digits that are used in the randomly generated code. Alternatively, if one had to keep a lot of digits on the gaming coupon, the only available option would be to condense the bar code thus making the reading of the code more difficult and more error prone. Either of these adverse effects would reduce player satisfaction of using a coinless system and frustrate the purposes of the gaming establishment.

Yet another consideration is the fact that the fewer the number of digits used in a code, particularly when some of those numbers i.e. the monetary value, are known, the greater

the security risk. Finally, the Burns et al system does not require the participation of the central processor in the determination of the gaming coupon amount as does the present invention, since this information is already encoded on the ticket. In other words, the method of using the encoded bar code information as the sole cross reference to a unique address and gaming coupon value is unique to the present invention.

The Examiner also relied upon Burns et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,048,269 in rejecting claims 37, 38, 40, 43 and 46-55 as being obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). As discussed above, the use of a unique memory address in the manner and for the purpose of determining the validity and value of a gaming value at a central processor at a remote point in time is unique and distinguishable, as such the remaining claims 37, 38, and 46-55 are patentable over Burns et. al..

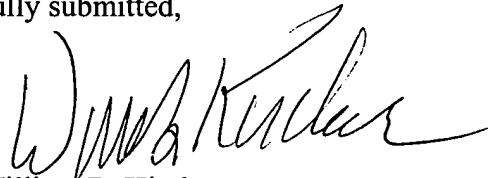
The Examiner also relied upon Burns et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,048,269 in view of Kelly et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,816,918 in rejecting claims 8, 61, 68, and 76 as being obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). The use of the smart cards to hold only the unique address information rather than the associated gaming value is unique and non-obvious because of the advantages discussed above with respect to security and need to store smaller numbers of encoded digits.

In the Burns et. al., the discussion about the encoded information and the interpretation or verification along with the determination of the associated value of a gaming slip is a critical component and is the focus of the system. On the one hand, the present invention utilizes a system and method that allows the use of less information, with more security and involves the use of centralized processor to determine monetary values, as opposed to the cited reference where significantly more encoded digits are required, part of the code is publicized and the monetary amount is determined at the local gaming machine. The focus in applicant's inventive method is on a more secure system and central processing for coinless gaming.

In view of the differences between the inventions amended and remaining claims, and the methods taught by the Burns, Kelly and Bridgeman et al patents, it is submitted that the method and device for implementing a coinless gaming environment set forth in the amended and remaining claims 1-12, 14-19, 21-23, 26-28, 31-34, 37-39, 41-42, 44-45, and 47- 78 are patentably distinguishable over the Burns and Kelly et al patents, and it is submitted that the application is in proper form for allowance.

Should the Examiner feel that any unresolved issues remain in the case, the undersigned may be contacted at (800) 821-7962 to arrange for an issue resolving conference

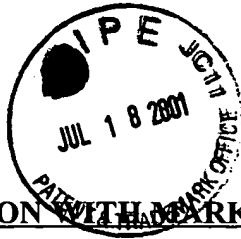
Respectfully submitted,



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the claims:

Please amend claims 1, 11 and 12 as follows:

(Amended) 51. The method for implementing a coinless gaming environment as recited in claim [47]49, wherein said reading of said unique identifier includes scanning said bar code.

(Amended) 78. The change machine as recited in claim 71 wherein said input is a combined bar code reader and currency reader.

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